

Message Text

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ACTION MBFR-03

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S E C R E T VIENNA 3332

FROM US REP MBFR

E. O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PARM

SUBJECT: MBFR: POSSIBLE UK ACTION ON HUNGARY

1. SUMMARY: THIS MESSAGE DISCUSSES THE NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF THE PRESENT UK PROPOSAL TO POSTPONE RESOLUTION OF THE QUESTION OF THE STATUS OF PARTICIPANTS IN MBFR TO THE FALL NEGOTIATIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. WITH REGART TO THE FORECAST CONTAINED IN PARA 3 OF USNATO 1992, TO THE EXTENT THAT A POSSIBLE UK PROPOSAL IN A FURTHER NAC SESSION ON THE HUNGARIAN ISSUE IS A REPETITION OF THAT MADE BY THOMSON ON APRIL 18 AND IS BASED ON THE CONCEPT OF CARRYING OVER THE PARTICIPATION QUESTION FOR RESOLUTION IN THE FALL NEGOTIATIONS, SUCH A PROPOSAL WOULD APPEAR TO US TO BE UNWORKABLE AND A BAD IDEA.

3. TO GIVE SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO THE UK PROPOSAL WOULD PROBABLY LEAD TO EXTENDED CONTROVERSY WITHIN NAC OWING TO OPPOSITION BY THE SOUTHERN FLANKS. IF FINALLY ACCEPTED BY NAC, IT IS VERY DOUBTFUL IT WOULD BE ACCEPTED BY THE SOVIETS. THE
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SOVIET REPRESENTATIVES IN VIENNA HAVE TOLD US REPEATEDLY THAT THEY HAVE FIRM INSTRUCTIONS FROM MOSCOW, WHICH HAVE BEEN SEVERAL TIMES CONFIRMED DURING THE PRESENT TALKS, TO ESTABLISH A PATTERN OF PARTICIPATION IN THE FALL NEGOTIATIONS DURING THE PRESENT PRELIMINARY TALKS. THEY WILL UNDOUBTEDLY INSIST ON THIS AND WE WOULD SEE LITTLE OR NO PROSPECT OF THEIR AGREEING TO A PROPOSAL TO CARRY OVER THE ENTIRE ISSUE UNRESOLVED. FOR THEIR PART, THE ALLIES HAVE FROM THE OUTSET ALSO INSISTED THAT THE PATTERN OF PARTICIPATION IN THE NEGOTIATIONS MUST BE ESTABLISHED NOW. FOR THE ALLIES TO REVERSE THEIR COURSE AT THIS POINT COULD CAUSE THE SOVIETS TO HAVE SERIOUS QUESTIONS ABOUT THE WORKABILITY OF THE WHOLE ENTERPRISE. THE MOST PROBABLE OUTCOME IF A PROPOSAL OF THIS SORT WERE TO BE MADE TO THE EAST WOULD BE A PRESTIGE LOSS FOR NATO FOLLOWING REJECTION OF ANOTHER NATO PROPOSAL AND A CONTINUATION OF THE IMPASSE.

4. IF, DESPITE THIS PREDICTION, THE PROPOSAL WERE IN FACT ACCEPTED BY THE EAST, THE OUTCOME WOULD BE NEGATIVE FOR ALLIED INTERESTS. IT WOULD LEAVE THE STATUS OF ALL PARTICIPANTS ENTIRELY OPEN AT THE OUTSET OF THE NEGOTIATIONS. THERE WOULD THEN BE TWO COURSES FOR THE WEST. THE FIRST WOULD BE TO MAKE A NEW EFFORT TO REACH AGREEMENT ON THE STATUS OF ALL PARTICIPANTS. THIS ENTERPRISE MIGHT TAKE SEVERAL MONTHS AND WOULD BEGIN THE NEGOTIATIONS ON A SOUR NOTE WHICH WOULD HAVE ADVERSE EFFECT BOTH ON THE NEGOTIATING PARTICIPANTS AND ON WESTERN PUBLIC OPINION. IT IS UNCLEAR IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES WHETHER THE ALLIES COULD GET THE SOVIETS BACK TO THEIR PRESENT POSITION OF ADMITTING THAT HUNGARY COULD PARTICIPATE IN INDIVIDUAL MEASURES. THERE WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY BE GREAT PRESSURE ON ITALY. THE SECOND COURSE WOULD, IN ORDER TO AVOID MAKING A CONCESSION ON HUNGARY, BE TO LEAVE THE STATUS OF ALL PARTICIPANTS ENTIRELY OPEN THROUGHOUT THE NEGOTIATIONS UNTIL THE END PHASE WHEN DECISIONS ARE MADE. IN SUCH AN EVENT, UK SENSITIVITIES ON HUNGARIAN ISSUE WOULD DRIVE THE ENTIRE ENTERPRISE. EITHER POSSIBILITY WOULD MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR THE SOVIETS TO WORK ON BROADENING THE FOCUS OF THE NEGOTIATIONS AND FOR THE ROMANIANS TO PRESS THEIR OWN CONCEPT OF THE BALKAN NEGOTIATIONS, ELIMINATING THE EFFECTIVE FOCUS ON CENTRAL EUROPE WHICH ARISES FROM AGREEMENT ON THE CIRCLE OF DIRECT PARTICIPANTS.

5. IF THE UK PERSISTS WITH ITS PROPOSAL, WE DO NOT BELIEVE
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NAC SHOULD BE LEFT IN ANY DOUBT AS TO THESE POTENTIAL CONSE-

QUENCES OF ITS APPROACH, WHICH DOES NOT APPEAR TO US TO HAVE BEEN CAREFULLY THOUGHT THROUGH. SINCE THE UK IS CLEARLY ISOLATED WITH REGARD TO HUNGARY AND REALIZES THIS, THE BEST COURSE, AS SEEN FROM HERE, IS TO MAINTAIN PRESSURE FOR ACCEPTANCE OF THE SOVIET PROPOSAL AND TO URGE RAPID DECISION.

6. IF THE UK SHOULD CEDE ON THE PARTICIPATION ISSUE, BUT NONE-THELESS PERSIST WITH ITS PROPOSAL FOR WINDING UP THE EXPLORATIONS RAPIDLY BY TELESOPING THE AGENDA DISCUSSIONS AND SEEKING A COMMUNIQUE CONTAINING A SPECIFIC DATE AND PRESS FOR NEGOTIATIONS WITH ONLY A BRIEF GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE AGENDA, THIS COULD BE A USEFUL CONCEPT, PROVIDED ANY NAC GUIDANCE ON IT IS KEPT IN GENERAL TERMS AND TACTICS ARE LEFT TO THE AD HOC GROUP. AS WE SEE THE SITUATION IN VIENNA WITH REGARD TO AGENDA, SOVIETS AND EAST EUROPEAN DELEGATIONS HAVE INSTRUCTIONS TO SEEK AGREEMENT ON AN AGENDA AND HAVE SOME SPECIFIC PROPOSALS IN MIND. TO AVOID CONFUSION, IT PROBABLY WOULD BE BEST TO HAVE A ROUTINE EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON AGENDA ITEMS AND THEN, IF EASY AGREEMENT DOES NOT APPEAR IN THE OFFING, TO MOVE TO AN EFFORT TO FIND A SINGLE AGREED DESCRIPTION OF THE SUBJECT MATTER OF THE NEGOTIATIONS WHICH WOULD BE USED IN A COMMUNIQUE, AND PROCEED TO DRAFTING COMMUNIQUE ITSELF.

7. ALL OF THIS MAY POSE CERTAIN DIFFICULT TACTICAL PROBLEMS, SO THAT IF NAC SHOULD AGREE ON THIS GENERAL LINE, PERHAPS THE BEST GUIDANCE WOULD BE THAT THE AD HOC GROUP SHOULD MAKE A GENERAL EXPLORATION OF EASTERN ATTITUDES ON THE AGENDA AND THAT IF, IN ITS VIEW, THE OUTCOME DOES NOT PROVE SATISFACTORY IN TERMS OF THE GAP PAPER, IT SHOULD THEN MOVE ON TO SEEK AGREEMENT ON DATE, SITE AND FINAL COMMUNIQUE. WE WOULD NOTE IN THIS CONNECTION THAT IT IS INCREASINGLY CLEAR FROM REMARKS OF SOVIET REPRESENTATIVE HERE THAT THEY DO NOT WISH TO AGREE TO A SPECIFIC DATE FOR MBFR NEGOTIATIONS IN SEPTEMBER/ OCTOBER 1973 UNTIL A DATE HAS BEEN SET IN HELSINKI FOR THE FIRST PHASE OF SCSE. HUMES

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